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## Majority Whip, Amendment Author Announce: Historic Religious Freedom Vote Set

(Washington, D.C.) - The U.S. House of Representatives will vote on a proposed religious freedom constitutional amendment on June 4th, Majority Whip Tom DeLay, (R-TX), and Rep. Ernest Istook, (R-OK), confirmed today. The vote will be on the Religious Freedom Amendment (RFA), also known as House Joint Resolution 78, sponsored by Congressman Istook, with over 150 co-sponsors.

The upcoming vote will be the first time in 27 years the U.S. House has voted on a proposed constitutional amendment to restore voluntary prayer in schools and protect religious freedom. The last vote was in 1971, on a measure forced to the House floor by petition.

**"This vote will provide an opportunity for Members of the House to be put on record as supporters of religious freedoms and 'One nation under God. Today, our schools are filled with drugs and violence- it's time we made room for a little prayer instead,"** said DeLay.

DeLay noted the only way to remedy more than three decades of court decisions is to clarify the original intent of the First Amendment.

**"Even if we pass religious freedom legislation every year, the liberal establishment will petition the Supreme Court to overturn it - and they will most likely succeed. However, the Constitution provides another way for the American people to re-establish religious freedoms, that's through a Constitutional amendment."**

The amendment has been a work in progress for nearly three years, and Rep. Istook said the final language strikes "a good Constitutional balance."

**"The Religious Freedom Amendment is carefully crafted to protect everyone's religious rights - not merely the rights of those belonging to a 'majority religion,' or a 'minority religion,' or even no religion at all,"** said Istook. **"Like the rest of the Constitution, this is designed to protect the unalienable rights of all Americans, which our Founding Fathers recognized come from our 'Creator.'"**

The actual text of H.J. Res. 78 is as follows:

### **The Religious Freedom Amendment (House Joint Resolution 78)**

"To secure the people's right to acknowledge God according to the dictates of conscience: Neither the United States nor any State shall establish any official religion, but the people's right to pray and to recognize their religious beliefs, heritage or traditions on public property, including schools, shall not be infringed. Neither the United States nor any state shall require any person to join in prayer or other religious activity, prescribe school prayers, discriminate against religion, or deny equal access to a benefit on account of religion."

For more information, contact Michael Scanlon in Rep. DeLay's office at 202-225-0197, or Steve Jones in Rep. Istook's office at 202-225-2132.

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